

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 8, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 6 - STAFF UPDATES

ISSUE: Staff update to Transportation Commission on various ongoing projects

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the staff update.

A. CRYSTAL CITY / POTOMAC YARD (ROUTE 1) TRANSITWAY

The City received a TIGER grant for the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway totaling \$8.5 million. The grant was allocated to the design/build of the Route 1 Transitway between Monroe Avenue and Potomac Avenue in dedicated lanes. Five other grants have been received to aid in the design/construction of various elements within the Transitway project. The total cost of the Transitway including vehicles is approximately \$20 million.

Construction began in July 2012 on the Transitway and is anticipated to be completed in December 2013. Heavy and hazardous materials have been found on-site during excavation. The contractor is working with the City to dispose of the materials correctly.

The first section of the Transitway (between Swann Avenue and E. Custis Avenue) was poured April 3, 2013. Concrete pours will continue to the south over the next several months.

In the first three weeks of May, work will be dependent on the weather, but continued construction is anticipated within the Transitway south of Custis Avenue and on the widening of Route 1 between Potomac Avenue and Howell Avenue. Further widening of Route 1 is necessary to allow for sufficient area in the median to construct two stations on the north side of Potomac Avenue. The left turn lane from Southbound Route 1 to Eastbound Potomac Avenue has been removed from service as of March 28, 2013 to allow for the southbound station at Potomac Avenue.

The City and Arlington County participated in a work group with WMATA to develop the branding concept for the premium service that will operate in the Transitway. With the support of marketing firm Pulsar Advertising, the work group held three focus groups, conducted an online survey, and reviewed a variety of design concepts for the new brand. Staff will provide a full update to the Transportation Commission in June, including the recommended design.

B. POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION

The Potomac Yard Metro project is an infill Metrorail station located between the National Airport and Braddock Road Metrorail stations on the Blue and Yellow lines in the vicinity of the Potomac Yard Development.

The development of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the project is currently underway. The project team is advancing the socioeconomic, environmental, and transportation impact assessments for the no build and three build alternatives. When complete, the DEIS will comprehensively assess the environmental effects of the build alternatives and the no-build alternative, and will address key environmental considerations, including air quality and climate change, transportation and land use, visual resources, parklands, historic and cultural resources, noise, vibration, wetlands and habitats, and temporary construction impacts.

Under the initial schedule, the DEIS was to be released on May 3, 2013, followed by several Community Education and Discussion Workshops and a public hearing scheduled for the last week in June. However, during the preliminary agency review, several technical changes and amendments were recommended, which the project team is incorporating into the draft. With this additional work, it became clear the original schedule could not be met and public engagement would have occurred during the summer, which would have resulted in less opportunity for community input.

To encourage public participation, the City requested, and the cooperating agencies agreed, to modify the schedule so the DEIS will be released in the fall, followed by additional public outreach meetings and a public hearing. The Alexandria City Council likely will consider the selection of a preferred alternative in late fall 2013. This shift in the schedule will enable maximum civic engagement by holding the community meetings and the DEIS hearing when the community and stakeholders in this process are able to be fully present to participate. The shift will also allow the City and cooperating agencies more time to discuss the impacts of the alternatives.

For more information on the project, please visit www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyard.